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Mental Health Europe

ANNUAL REPORT 2007



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ANNUAL REPORT 2007

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

The year 2007 was the European Year of Equal Opportunities. This was initiated in Berlin in January and concluded in Lisbon in November, but the positive action to promote equality of opportunity will continue well beyond this year. The active participation of MHE in this vision can be seen as making a valuable contribution to the challenging, yet rewarding, process of raising awareness of the contribution that individuals, families, schools, the workplace and therapeutic environments can make to the promotion of positive mental health and well-being.

The vision of MHE was celebrated at its annual conference in Vienna in June at which we were delighted to join in partnership with ProMente Austria to explore the theme of *"No Health without Mental Health – from Slogan to Reality"*. The conference received positive support in both the local and national press and raised awareness amongst policy makers and politicians that mental health is the key indicator of economic, social and human progress.

One of the most important developments of 2007 was the conclusion of the MHE Transnational Exchange Project *"Good Practices Project for Combating Social Exclusion of People with Mental Health Problems"*. Together with members from ten countries MHE has been privileged to visit pioneering examples of good practice in Belgium, Czech Republic, Scotland and Slovakia, and these provided valuable opportunities to celebrate and share the diversity of ways in which creative projects to develop positive mental health and well-being and to promote social inclusion are being developed.

I believe that at the heart of the European vision for mental health is the vibrant and vital contribution that such high quality local community based projects and initiatives make. It has been a pleasure to meet many people in 2007 who with their hearts and minds and their professional and personal commitment deliver excellent services in all parts of Europe.

MHE, at the invitation of John Bowis MEP, held a vibrant debate in the European Parliament in December exploring the theme *"Equal Chance, Equal Respect: Promoting Mental Well-Being in Employment"*. This event recognised that in the midst of economic growth and progress the experience of many European citizens is that of stress and mental ill-health, particularly related to the world of work.

We are all aware that global issues impact upon us at the local level and therefore we at MHE see ourselves as the focal NGO through which the issues from Europe and the wider world connect with your local communities wherever you are. Central to MHE's vision is the belief in the positive promotion of well-being and we affirm that all people deserve to be treated with respect and to be afforded active inclusion socially, economically and politically in order to work towards social cohesion and respect for civil society.

I wish to thank all of you who support MHE, especially service users and their families, for your determined belief in the need to actively continue to work for improvements in the quality of life of those who are vulnerable and experience mental ill-health in their daily lives.

Malgorzata Kmita
MHE President

INTRODUCTION

MHE has a history and plays an important role in raising awareness and in combating the taboos, stigma and prejudices associated with mental illness. Mainstreaming mental health in the field of social inclusion has become a principal activity of MHE and a major area of concern for people with chronic mental health problems. To this end MHE develops European exchange projects together with its member organisations, formulates recommendations for policies and strategies on mental health and social inclusion based on these projects, and lobbies the European Institutions in order to increase awareness of this important issue – just as MHE’s members campaign on a national and local level.

In 2007 MHE’s work programme in this field was entitled *"From exclusion to inclusion: Making social inclusion a reality for people with mental health problems in the European Union"* (supported by the European Commission Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion). The work programme built on the initial results and lessons learned from the 2005-2007 MHE project *"Good Practices for Combating Social Exclusion of People with Mental Health Problems"*, and it aimed to increase efforts to raise awareness of the need to promote the social inclusion of people with mental health problems at all levels:

- analysing the situation of social exclusion of people with mental health problems in all the EU Member States, in access to health and social services, employment, education and training, housing, transport and social activities;
- in every EU Member State, bringing together the different stakeholders and discussing together with all of them the present situation of social exclusion of people with mental health problems as well as developing policy proposals and strategies for social inclusion of people with mental health problems;
- in every EU Member State, providing input into the National Reports on Strategies on Social Protection and Social Inclusion and participating in the monitoring and implementation of the Reports;
- disseminating the results of the activities at all levels, local, national, regional and European.

With its 2007 work programme MHE has made a significant step towards the promotion of social inclusion of people with mental health problems, i.e. towards a European society in which all people enjoy a high level of mental health, live as full citizens and have access to their human rights and to appropriate services and support when needed, through a better integration of mental health issues into the social inclusion process at the local, national, regional and European level.

Another important field of action for MHE is the work on the promotion of mental health and well-being. We were involved as partners in some important projects such as ProMenPol, CAMHEE and IMHPA project. And also in 2007 the Mental Health Economics project came to an end. You will read more about all this in this annual report.

More detailed information can be found on MHE’s website: www.mhe-sme.org/

We want to thank all our members and supporters for their work and efforts in 2007, and we hope to continue our successful collaboration on realising our joint objectives!

Mary Van Dievel,
MHE Director.

MHE's MISSION

For more than two decades MHE has had a history of promoting and representing mental health in its broadest sense in Europe. MHE has found recognition and acknowledgement for its leading and innovative role. In recent years, the necessity and the benefits of having a European voice for mental health have become even more evident.

MHE offers an opportunity for every organisation that wants to contribute to building a Europe in which all citizens enjoy a high level of mental health, within the European Union as well as beyond in the larger Europe. MHE supports the emancipation of different groups in the mental health field in order to establish equal partnerships and opportunities among the different parties and to ensure that the mental health needs of the population are met.

MHE plays an important role in raising awareness and in combating the taboos, stigma and prejudices associated with mental illness.

In order to fulfil this strategic role, MHE works closely with the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, has a participative status with the Council of Europe and a liaison function for mental health promotion with the European Commission.

MHE is a member of several European advocacy and lobbying groups: the Social Platform, the European Public Health Alliance, the European Disability Forum, the European Patients' Forum and the European Women's Lobby.

STRUCTURE OF MHE

MHE is a European NGO and representative organisation of associations and organisations active in the field of mental health at local, national, regional and European level. This includes NGOs, users of mental health services, their families and carers, professionals, research and educational institutions and volunteers. On 31 December 2007, MHE had 51 Full Member Organisations, 16 Associate Member Organisations and 64 Individual Members.

MHE MEMBERS

Full Member Organisations: 51
Associate Member Organisations: 16
Individual Members: 64

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

All the Full Members and Voting Individual Members.
Associate Members and the other Individual Members can participate but have no voting right.
Meets once per year.
Is the highest decision-making body.

|

BOARD

Composed of 15 members representing the Full Member Organisations (12) and Voting Individual Members (3).
Meets at least twice per year.

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

5 members (President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and 1 member without portfolio).
Elected by the Board + ex officio the Director and Senior Policy Advisers.
Meets at least 4 times per year.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The MHE General Assembly took place on 02 June 2007 in Vienna. About 50 persons were present.

The Assembly approved and adopted the Annual Report 2006, the balance of 2006 and the budget for 2007.

MHE BOARD (2006-2009)

Claude Deutsch, Advocacy France
Sandra Grant, InterMinds, Scotland
Brian Howard, Mental Health Ireland
Marianne Carisius Kastrup, SIND, Denmark
Luigi Leonori, SMES-Europa, Belgium
Malgorzata Kmita, United Kingdom
Nace Kovac, SENT, Slovenia
Elisabeth Muschik, Pro Mente Austria
Petr Nawka, Integra, Slovakia
Pino Pini, AISMe, Italy
Marita Ruohonen, the Finnish Association for Mental Health
Kristina Salonen, Finland
Dimitris Tataridis, Society of Social Psychiatry and Mental Health, Greece
Colette Versporten, Belgium

The MHE Board met only once in 2007.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President: Malgorzata Kmita
Vice-President: Elisabeth Muschik
Treasurer: Colette Versporten
Secretary: Nace Kovac
Member without portfolio: Brian Howard

The Executive Committee met 4 times in 2007.

SENIOR POLICY ADVISORS

John Henderson
Josée Van Remoortel

MHE SECRETARIAT

Director:

Mary Van Dievel

Project Coordinators:

Mariantonietta Fresu "Mental Health Economics European Network – Phase II" (MHEEN II)

Sogol Noorani "Good Practices for Combating Social Exclusion of People with Mental Health Problems" (from September 2007 on Social Policy Officer)

Information Officer:

Fanny Muller

Administrative Assistant:

Marie-Christine Terlaeken (until November 2007)

MHE COMMITTEES

Membership and Accreditation Committee

Chair: Josée Van Remoortel, Senior Policy Adviser MHE
Paul Arteel, Flemish Association for Mental Health, Belgium
Athena Frangouli, Society of Social Psychiatry and Mental Health, Greece
Mariano Hernandez, Individual Member, Spain
Inge Schöck, Germany
Vesna Svab, SENT, Slovenian Association for Mental Health, Slovenia

Finance Committee

Chair: Colette Versporten, Treasurer MHE
Brian Howard, MHE Board Member, Mental Health Ireland
Josée Van Remoortel, Senior Policy Adviser, MHE

Ex officio:

Benoit Broekmans, Accountant
Mary Van Dievel, Director MHE

MHE Committee on Mental Health and Human Rights

Chair: Peter Kinderman, UK
Coordinator: Fanny Muller, MHE Information Officer
Paul Arteel, Belgium
John Connolly, Ireland
Claude Deutsch, MHE Board member, France
Martine Dutoit, France
Gabor Gombos, Hungary
John Henderson, MHE Senior Policy Adviser
Malgorzata Kmita, MHE President
Nace Kovac, Sent, MHE Board Member
Pirkko Lahti, Finland
Elisabeth Muschik, MHE Vice-President
Mary Van Dievel, Director MHE
Josée Van Remoortel, MHE Senior Policy Adviser

MHE Committee on Mental Health and Women

Chair: Colette Versporten, Belgium
Sandra Grant, UK
Malgorzata Kmita, UK
Elisabeth Muschik, Austria
Mary Van Dievel, MHE
Josée Van Remoortel, MHE
Marita Ruohonen, Finland
Kristina Salonen, Finland

MHE Committee on Mental Health and Minority Ethnic Communities (established in June 2007)

Chair: Marianne Kastrup, Denmark
Coordinator: Sogol Noorani, MHE Policy Officer
Pamela Bell, Belgium
Tarafa Baghajati, Austria
Julie-Jaye Charles, UK
Sandra Grant, Scotland
Malgorzata Kmita, MHE President
Els van Mourik, Netherlands
Espe Ngituka, UK
Valeriu Nicolae, Romania
Raghu Raghavan, UK
Ali Taghian, Austria
Alain Vanoeteren, Belgium
Marcel Vige, UK
Felicity De Zulueta, UK

FINANCES

FINANCIAL SITUATION IN 2007 - COMMENTS

1. Income and expenditure

Revenue

The revenue of MHE is mainly made up of subsidies granted by the European Union. To this revenue, we have to add the participation of the partners (co-funding), the membership fees, the income from rent and some other revenues (ONEM - Belgian National Employment Agency) intervention, donations, financial and exceptional products).

Expenses

There are three kinds of expenses:

1. Operational costs due to the follow up of the projects and the work programme (salaries of the partners, accommodation and travel costs, etc.);
2. Personnel costs;
3. Overheads (building, office expenses, technical support, etc.).

The accounts of 2007 have been closed with a benefit of 220.47 EUR.

2. Balance sheet

Assets

The MHE premises are being renovated. The first stage has started during this budgetary year and the investments for the renovation work amounted already to 22,521.54 EUR by 31 December 2007. We have a sound budget and subsidies amounting to 153,000.00 EUR are still due.

Liabilities

During 2008 we are going to finish paying the loan made for buying the MHE building. During this budgetary year, we have contracted a new loan for the renovation of the premises for an amount that is not yet defined accurately. It should be some 40,000 EUR.

The debt to the suppliers has increased. This is due to a massive arrival of salary invoices at the end of December. Most of the invoices have been paid during the first part of 2008.

We have settled provisions amounting to 22,000 EUR for our staff leaving, and provisions amounting to 15,000 EUR for the major repairs and upkeep of the premises. A group insurance has been contracted and included in the accounts of 2007. The subsidies carried forward amount to 14,080 EUR.

Benoît Broekmans, accountant and tax adviser

FEEDBACK FROM THE TREASURER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE PRESIDENT

The Finance Committee met twice in 2007 in order to take care of the follow up of the financial situation.

Like in 2006, the financial situation in 2007 involves the financial equilibrium consolidation: the budget is sound, the reimbursement of the loan for buying the building is finishing, provisions have been settled for staff leaving and the first necessary renovations have been carried out in the building.

This sound situation is the result of a strict management of the expenditures during this year.

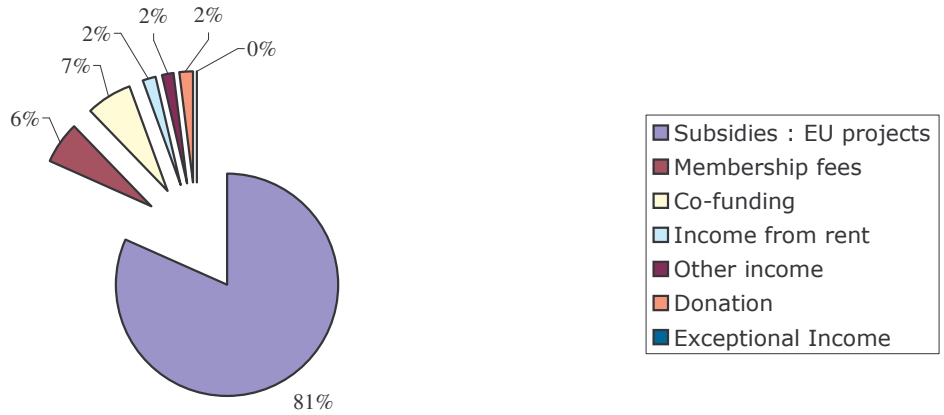
Thanks to the quality work carried out by Mary Van Dievel, Director, as well as the Team that assists her, MHE has been able to be granted several important projects from the European Commission. The European recognition should encourage new membership from the 27 countries and the regular payment of the membership fees from the members who are already registered. Presently only 6% of our revenues comes from the membership fees. Let us try and double this figure in 2008.

It is a real pleasure for a treasurer to be able to present you these positive financial results!

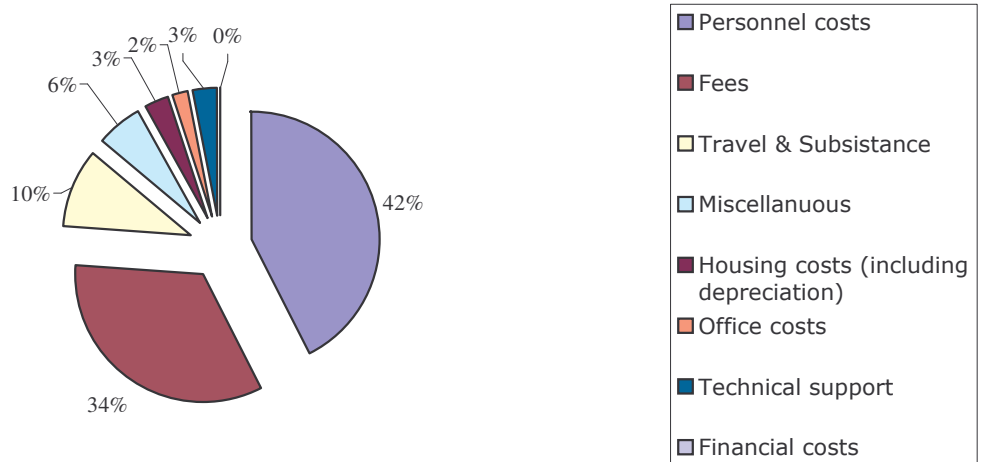
May the Director, the Advisers, the Board and the whole Team be thanked for their important involvement within MHE.

Colette Versporten

Income 2007



Expenditure 2007



MHE'S MAIN AREAS OF WORK

MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION AND PREVENTION OF DISORDERS

In its 2007 Annual Policy Strategy, the Commission undertook to develop a Community framework for safe, high quality and efficient health services by reinforcing cooperation between Member States and providing certainty over the application of Community law to health services and health care. MHE responded to the Commission consultation on health services and called for health service organisation to be based on principles of accessibility, coordinated care, continuity of care, effectiveness, equity and respect for human rights. Moreover, MHE made a plea for the establishment of a Community framework to support the provision of mental health services.

On 23 October 2007, the European Commission adopted the Health Strategy White Paper "*Together for Health: A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013*". This Strategy aims to provide, for the first time, an overarching strategic framework focusing around three elements: 1) core issues which need to be addressed in order to protect and improve health in Europe, *including mental health and well-being* 2) integrating health in all policies, and 3) strengthening the EU's voice in global health. The Strategy aims to set clear objectives to guide future work on health at the European level, and to put in place an implementation mechanism to achieve those objectives, working in partnership with Member States. In its response to the Commission's discussion document on the strategy, MHE stressed that the strategy should give more emphasis to the commitment to mainstreaming health, including mental health, in other sectors and policies of the EU.

MHE has been involved in the follow-up of the consultation on the Commission's Green Paper on mental health (2005). In December 2007, the European Commission announced that the foreseen EU Mental Health Strategy has been replaced by plans for the establishment of a "Mental Health Pact". The first step in this process will be a High Level Conference on Mental Health on 13 June 2008 in Brussels. The aim of the High Level Conference is to establish a European Pact on Mental Health. This pact will be a declaration of the will of Member States and stakeholders from sectors such as health, education, workplace, social affairs and civil society to engage in longer-term work of exchange and cooperation on the role of mental health, wellbeing and disorders. MHE regrets that the European Union has failed to reach an agreement on the adoption of a common EU Mental Health Strategy promoting positive mental health and well-being for all, and encouraging better cooperation between Member States in order to address inequalities within and between countries.

MHE key activities and events:

- Participation in the activities of the European Network for mental health promotion and mental disorders prevention (IMHPA), supported by the European Commission, DG Health and Consumer Protection (***ended in September***)
- MHE lunch debate on "*Equal Chance, Equal Respect: Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing in Employment*" hosted by John Bowis MEP (EPP-ED Group) at the European Parliament in Brussels (***5 December***)
- Coordination of the "*Mental Health Economics European Network – Phase II*" project, led by the London School of Economics and supported by the European Commission, DG Health and Consumer Protection (***ended in December***)
- Participation in the meetings of the EU Health Policy Forum, bringing together umbrella organisations representing stakeholders in the health sector to ensure

that the EU's Health Strategy is open, transparent and responds to the public concerns **(ongoing)**

- Participation in the project "ProMenPol – Promoting and Protecting Mental Health, Supporting Policy through Integration of Research, Current Approaches and Practice", supported by 6th Framework Programme **(ongoing)**
- Participation in the European project "CAMHEE - Child and adolescent mental health in enlarged EU", supported by the European Commission, DG Health and Consumer Protection **(ongoing)**
- Involvement in the Stakeholder Consultation Group on Information to Patients, set up by the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) with the aim of coordinating action with other health and consumer organizations for a common advocacy strategy to maintain public health concern in the debate on information to patients **(ongoing)**

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND MENTAL HEALTH

The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) represents the social dimension of the EU Lisbon Strategy, which was established in 2000 and reviewed and revised in 2005. Under the Lisbon Strategy there is intended to be mutually reinforcing feedback between economic, employment and social policies. This intention was reaffirmed by the meeting of EU Heads of State and Governments in spring 2007, when they stressed in their Conclusions that "the common social objectives of Member States should be better taken into account within the Lisbon agenda". As part of the OMC process Member States produce National Reports on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion (National Strategic Reports) on a regular basis. The first such reports, covering the three main strands of the OMC for the period 2006-2008 (social inclusion, pensions and healthcare and long-term care), were submitted to the European Commission in September 2006.

In 2007, MHE carried out its work programme in the field of social inclusion under the title "*From Exclusion to Inclusion: Making Social Inclusion a Reality for People with Mental Health Problems in the European Union*". The programme was based on the initial results and lessons learned from the MHE project on "*Good practices for Combating Social Exclusion of People with Mental Health Problems*", which came to an end in 2007. The project, which involved an analysis of the situation of social exclusion of people with mental health problems in the involved ten partner countries in Europe, made apparent the urgent need for concerted efforts and actions in all the EU Member States to break the vicious cycle mental health problems and social exclusion.

MHE's 2007 work programme thus aimed at increasing efforts to raise awareness at all levels and among all actors of the current challenges and needs faced by people with mental health problems who are experiencing social exclusion, and to develop concrete suggestions that can help professionals and policy makers to strengthen the framework for national strategy development and policy coordination within and between the Member States in Europe on issues relating to this particularly vulnerable group.

To this end, MHE member organisations in all EU Member States gathered information on the situation of social exclusion of people with mental health problems, brought together the different stakeholders and discussed together with all of them the present situation of social exclusion of people with mental health problems. The gathered information together with developed policy proposals and proposals for strategies for social inclusion of people with mental health problems were sent back to MHE, and they will be compiled and published as part of an EU study on mental health and social inclusion. MHE hopes that the publication will serve as a useful tool in all the Member States for providing input into the National Strategic Reports as well as advocating strategies for the promotion of social inclusion of people with mental health problems.

MHE key activities and events:

- MHE project "*Good Practices for Combating Social Exclusion of People with Mental Health Problems*", a transnational exchange project funded under the European Commission Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion (2002-2006) **(ended in August)**
- MHE work programme in the field of social inclusion "*From Exclusion to Inclusion: Making Social Inclusion a Reality for People with Mental Health Problems in the European Union*", with support from the European Commission Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion 2002-2006 **(January-December)**
- MHE capacity building seminar for members, Vienna, 30 May 2007, to strengthen MHE members' capacity in their fight against social exclusion of people with mental health problems **(May)**
- Final outcomes of the MHE transnational exchange project "*Good Practices for combating social exclusion of people with mental health problems*", presented on 01 June 2007 in the frame of the Mental Health Europe Conference 2007 in Vienna **(June)**
- MHE launch of the website and database of good practices, resulting from the MHE trans-national exchange project "*Good Practices for combating social exclusion of people with mental health problems*", on the occasion of the presentation of the project's final outcomes in the frame of the MHE Conference 2007 in Vienna **(June)**
- Publication of the MHE report "*Good Practices for Combating Social Exclusion of People with Mental Health Problems - A collection from Ten EU Member States resulting from Mental Health Europe's Transnational Exchange Project 2005-2007*" **(November)**
- Preparation of the MHE work programme 2008 (under the European Commission Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity 2007-2013-PROGRESS), with the overall goal to develop and strengthen MHE's capacities and that of its member organisations, including people with mental health problems, who are at risk of poverty and social exclusion, to inform and influence employment and social policy and processes at the local, national, regional and European level, with a view to better reflecting the needs of people with mental health problems **(December)**

DISABILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

In 2007, the European Commission published a Communication on the analysis of the situation of people with disabilities in the European Union and proposed new objectives for the Disability Action Plan 2008-2009. Considering that "disabled people continue to be disproportionately excluded from the labour market" and in order to tackle this situation, the Commission proposed to undertake actions for inclusive participation through accessibility, together with actions towards full enjoyment of fundamental rights.

In July 2007, the first provisions of the EU regulation on the rights of disabled air-passengers entered into force. The overall aim of the regulation is to guarantee equal treatment for all passengers, including "any person with reduced mobility or sensory impairment, intellectual disability or any other cause of disability, age, and whose situation needs appropriate attention and the adaptation to his or her particular needs of the service made available to all passengers". MHE supported the European Disability Forum (EDF) campaign on air passengers' rights targeted at the adoption of common safety rules in Europe, as well as the wide dissemination of the provisions of

the law. Efforts were also concentrated on improving the regulation and obtaining similar legislation for all forms of transport.

During this year MHE also took part in two significant European studies. The first one, led by Inclusion Europe and managed by the Commission's Unit for the Integration of People with Disabilities, focused on the specific risks of discrimination against persons in situation of major dependence or with complex needs. The study aimed to help better understand the obstacles faced by people with high dependency and to explore the ways to promote independent living. The study launched a discussion on the ways to promote person centred services in the community as means of fighting discrimination against people with high dependency. The second one, "*Deinstitutionalisation and Community Living – Outcomes and Costs*", was the result of a project funded by the European Commission and implemented by a European consortium led by the Tizard Centre at the University of Kent, the Personal Social Services Research Unit at the University of Kent and the London School of Economics (DECLOC Project). It aimed to help European governments modernise services for disabled people by replacing institutional care with community-based services that are focused on improving disabled people's quality of life and promoting their equal participation in society.

MHE worked together with the EDF on the rights of women and girls with disability, which was recognised as a key issue by a report of the European Parliament (EP) adopted in April 2007. MHE was represented at the European Conference "*Recognising the Rights of Girls and Women with Disabilities – An Added Value for Tomorrow's Society*". The purpose of the conference was to promote equality and improve the lives of girls and women with disabilities in Europe, within the framework of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, in order to mark the 10th anniversary of the EDF Manifesto by Girls and Women with Disabilities in Europe. During the conference, the Declaration on Women and Disability was presented and adopted.

MHE key activities and events:

- Involvement in the European Disability Forum (EDF) 10th anniversary campaign, "*1million4disability*" in favour of a comprehensive European disability legislation that will protect disabled people from discrimination in all fields of life **(January-October)**
- Participation in the European Coalition for Community Living (ECCL) User Involvement Seminar in Zagreb (Croatia). The objectives of the seminar were to discuss ways to involve users in the de-institutionalisation process and setting up of community based alternatives to institutions **(April)**
- Participation in the meeting of experts for the study on the "*Specific Risks of Discrimination against persons in situation of major dependence or with complex needs*" led by Inclusion Europe **(September)**
- Participation in the European Conference on "*Recognising the Rights of Girls and Women with Disabilities – An Added Value for Tomorrow's Society*", jointly organised in Madrid (Spain) by the Disabled Women Committee of EDF and CERMI (Spanish Committee of Representatives of Disabled People) **(November)**
- Participation in the International Conference on "*Deinstitutionalisation and Community Living: comparative perspectives and international implications*", which was organised in Prague (Czech Republic) by the DECLOC (Deinstitutionalisation and community living – outcomes and costs) Project **(November)**
- Collaboration with the European Parliament Disability Intergroup **(ongoing)**

HUMAN RIGHTS AND MENTAL HEALTH

The EU declared 2007 the "European Year of Equal Opportunities for All". MHE acknowledged the initiative since the stigma attached to mental health problems that leads to discrimination is still widespread. A Eurobarometer study in the EU-15 Member States in 2003 found that people with mental health problems were most likely to be perceived as not having "the same chance of getting a job, training or promotion" as anyone else. MHE raised awareness on this issue through its involvement in a wide EU study on multiple discrimination and the publication of the final results of a MHE survey showing that people with mental health problems continue to have no eligibility to certain types of financial support.

Also based on a non-discrimination approach is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This landmark treaty, adopted in December 2006 by the UN General Assembly, is the first legally-binding Convention which protects and promotes the rights of people with disabilities, including those with psycho-social disabilities (mental health problems) or intellectual disabilities. Its ratification will influence the revision of laws, politics and programs implemented in various countries. The Convention is supplemented by an Optional Protocol which will allow individuals to petition a Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on alleged violations of the Convention once all domestic forms of recourse have been exhausted. MHE has been following the accession and ratification process which went on throughout the year and should continue and end in 2008. MHE finds it essential to support the social model of disability, which is recognised in the Convention's preamble, instead of the medical approach which only lists the people's deficiencies and symptoms.

MHE has been active in monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe European Social Charter and participated in the assessment of the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union. The protection of European patients' rights and the adoption of a European Charter of Patients' Rights were among other MHE concerns.

All this work benefited from the political impulse generated by the adoption in December 2007 of the new Treaty for the European Union (Treaty of Lisbon) and a legally binding citizens' rights charter. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union will give European citizens a catalogue of rights legally binding on the institutions and bodies of the European Union and on the Member States when they are implementing EU law.

Expert support will also come from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, which started its work in March 2007 and will provide valuable insights to the European institutions and Member States in matters relating to fundamental rights. In its work, the Agency will depend in no small part upon assistance from civil society and the large number of non-governmental organisations which will compose an official cooperation network, the Fundamental Rights Platform. MHE was involved and contributed to the consultations on the Agency's civil society cooperation. MHE stressed the importance of ensuring that organisations from the mental health field would be represented in the Platform.

MHE key activities and events:

- Publication of the final results of the MHE survey on the allocation of a personal budget to people with mental health problems (**March**)
- Participation in the first European Patients' Rights Day (March) and in a Study Day on Patient's Rights (**October**)

- Meeting and collaboration with the rapporteur in charge of drafting the European Parliament Report on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union 2004-2007 **(October)**
- Launch of a MHE reporting activity on the implementation of the European Social Charter, in cooperation with the Council of Europe (CoE) European Social Charter and Social Policies Grouping **(October-ongoing)**
- Involvement in a study on multiple discrimination commissioned by the European Commission and carried out by the Danish Institute for Human Rights, with the aim of promoting the understanding of the causes and effects of multiple discrimination in the European Union **(until December)**
- Representation at the launching event of the Fundamental Rights Agency (March) and at the FRA consultative meeting with civil society on the setting up of the Fundamental Rights Platform **(December)**
- Collaboration with the International Non Governmental Organisations (INGOs) with participatory status with the Council of Europe **(ongoing)**

COMMUNICATION ON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

In 2007, MHE increased its efforts to communicate better with MHE members and other stakeholders.

MHE issued several press releases to highlight the major activities it has undertaken in different areas of work: social inclusion, mental health promotion and the prevention of disease, human rights, disability, etc. The MHE Newsletter and website (www.mhe-sme.org) reflected these developments.

MHE also launched additional websites specifically devoted to the two main projects it has been carrying out in 2007:

- "*Mental Health Economics European Network*", led by the London School of Economics and Political Science and coordinated by Mental Health Europe: www.mheen.org. The MHEEN website provides information related to MHEEN II partners and project activities, as well as news from other networks and key events on mental health economics issues.
- "*Good Practices for Combating Social Exclusion of People with Mental Health Problems*", coordinated by Mental Health Europe: <http://www.mentalhealth-socialinclusion.org/home.html>. The website contains a database of all the best practices from the 10 partner countries broken down by country and also by area. It is conceived as a source of inspiration for anybody who wants to learn about small, local initiatives that help supporting the social inclusion of people with mental health problems and that are easily transferable to other European countries.

Another important objective for MHE consisted in being more proactive on the European scene and raising the profile of the organisation and the awareness of decision makers, European networks and NGOs of MHE's mission and objectives in addressing positive mental health and well-being and promoting social inclusion of people with mental health problems.

MHE key activities and events:

- MHE conference "*No Health without Mental Health – From Slogan to Reality*", Vienna, Austria **(May-June)**
- "*Equal Chance, Equal Respect: Promoting Mental Health and Well-being in Employment*", MHE and John Bowis MEP awareness raising event at the European Parliament, broadcasted on the EPP-ED web TV **(December)**

- Online publication of the monthly MHE Newsletter, in English and French **(ongoing)**
- Regular up-date and inclusion of key information/data in the MHE website, in English and French **(ongoing)**
- Publication of press releases on different issues **(ongoing)**